

REVIEWS

Index to European Taxonomic Literature for 1965. Compiled by R. K. Brummitt. 166 pp. Published under the auspices of the Flora Europaea Organization by the International Bureau for Plant Taxonomy and Nomenclature, Utrecht, 1966, as *Regnum Vegetabile* Vol. 45. About \$6.33; members of IAPT \$3.00.

The importance of an annual index to botanical literature for an area the size of Europe can now be appreciated with this surprisingly vast first volume, described by the compiler as "experimental." The geographical coverage is extended from that of the *Flora Europaea* project to include also the Mediterranean margin of Africa down to the Sahara, and eastward through Jordan and Syria to the Caucasus. This is a handy guide to the periodic literature on north temperate plants and it goes quite far beyond the limitations of a strictly taxonomic index. It is patterned after and geographically complements the *A. E. T. F. A. T. Index* (Association pour l'Etude Taxonomique de la Flore d'Afrique Tropicale) which has appeared since 1953, covering similar information for Tropical and Southern Africa.

The table of contents directs one to the following categories: General; Biography; Bibliography; Herbaria, Botanical Institutes, Botanic Gardens; Phytogeography; Floras, Floristic Studies; Chromosome Surveys—these taking up 20 pages. The next 114 pages include the references to Pteridophyta, Gymnospermae, and Angiospermae. The angiosperms are arranged alphabetically by family and then by genus. The appendix, 15 pages contributed by I. K. Ferguson, is a listing of the 408 abbreviated journal names cited in the *Index* followed by the complete title—and even better coverage is promised for the future!

Most Americans, I should think, would believe that the plants of Europe are quite well known, at least in comparison to other parts of the world, and will be startled to find that this *Index* lists 1009 new names published in 1965 for Europe and adjacent areas. This includes five new family names, six new genera, and 263 new specific names. New names are presented in bold face if they are judged to be simultaneously validly published and legitimate. Other names appear in ordinary roman type. The introduction points out that some of the names may not be legitimate or valid for reasons not readily apparent in the place cited since it was not possible to confirm all details for this essentially one man production.

The format is good and easy to use and it would not seem possible to create a volume of this size and scope without the introduction of some judgment. This is seen in the selection of family names. The use of Compositae, Cruciferae, Gramineae, Labiatae, and Leguminosae shows pleasing conservatism. Names such as Buddlejaceae, Cleomaceae, Leonticaceae, and Visaceae remind one that systematic arrangement of even some common plants still is in a state of confusion with many interesting and unresolved problems. Use of the name "Capparidaceae" is a contradiction of the Code since only the name Capparaceae is conserved. The name Cleomaceae shows the consequences of splitting traditional groups since the genus *Polanisia* (herbaceous and intimately allied to *Cleome*) is indexed under "Capparidaceae" while *Cleome* appears only under Cleomaceae. There are cross references and it is quite clear that the purpose of this *Index* never was to arbitrate taxonomic controversy. The placement of *Ebenus* under Ebenaceae and *Eremurus* under Gramineae are rare but quite unimportant inadvertances.

Selected indices for specific fields or areas make very convenient reference resources for special audiences and there is the advantage that much information can be left out resulting in more rapid publication of the *Index*. This *Index* for Europe, undoubtedly stimulated by the *Flora Europaea* project, also will be useful to Americans. A similar kind of index would be desirable for North America now that a *Flora North America* project is underway. As in Europe and Great Britain, there is a limit to the number of institutions which receive enough journals with botanical inclusions. A world index to botanical literature, to include also other topics ap-

plicable to taxonomy, already is a vacant necessity, and its realization might bring botanists closer to the much sought after stability that they all want. With the combined efforts of I. A. P. T., A. S. P. T., and other large groups of botanists it would seem feasible to begin an annual review of the literature on systematic botany for rapid publication. The *Bibliography of Agriculture* comes closest to serving this need.

In this age of mechanical enlightenment it is too much to expect narrowly supported one-man or one-institution productions to continue indefinitely to turn out reference tools such as the *Gray Herbarium Card Index*, *Index Kewensis*, *Card Index to American Botanical Literature*, *Index Nominum Genericorum*, or *Index to Plant Chromosome Numbers*. There also is a need for the continuation of completed works such as Langman's *A selected guide to the literature on the flowering plants of Mexico*, Merrill & Walker's *A bibliography of eastern Asiatic botany*, Pfeifer's *Nomenclator*, Rehder's *Bibliography of cultivated trees and shrubs*, to name only a few. These noble contributions are of lasting international importance and should receive international support for continuance. With such a fine example at hand it may seem unreasonable to ask for even more but I believe that Brummitt's *Index* reaffirms the need for an annual world index to botanical literature and it would be most useful to me if it were in card form or rapidly available printouts. The beginning of such a long term enterprise could be one of the botanical goals of the forthcoming International Biological Years and mechanical sorting methods could satisfy almost everyone with just the right references.—WALLACE R. ERNST, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Botanical Latin. By WILLIAM T. STEARN. xiv + 566 pp., many illustrations. Hafner Publishing Company, 31 East 10th Street, New York, N. Y. 10003. 1966. \$16.75.

William T. Stearn's admirable work is not only a guide to the writing and deciphering of Latin descriptions and diagnoses but a valuable compendium of immensely varied botanical information as well. As such, it has earned an indispensable place on every systematic botanist's workshelf. Here is no mere "dry as dust" exposition of paradigms, conjugations, rules of syntax and all the other bases for correct Latin writing but a most entertainingly presented and eminently readable work replete with many topics of absorbing general interest. Among such, for example, is the history of the development of botanical Latin, both pre- and post-Linnaean, as an autonomous and fairly simplified and conventionalized form of expression based, however tenuously, on classical Latin. Another is an exposition of the influence of ancient and classical authors, culminating in the works of Ray and Tournefort, in supplying a concise descriptive vocabulary which was considerably elaborated and crystalized by Linnaeus — to mention only two of the many topics so felicitously touched upon. [One is indirectly admonished as to pitfalls to be avoided by the author's citation of somewhat amusing examples of bad "modern" botanical Latin.] Even as a reference compendium for such diverse matters as latinized geographical names of cities and regions, the formation of epithets based on the names of persons, standard botanical symbols and abbreviations, well illustrated examples of descriptive adjectives, a list of Latin color terms based on Lindley's and J. W. Jackson's works, pronunciation of botanical terms — again choosing at random subjects dealt with — Stearn's excellent and often discursive though nicely organized labor of love will readily recommend itself as a work the systematic botanical worker will feel he cannot afford to deny himself.

The book is divided into four main sections: Introductory chapters on the historical development of botanical Latin and a preliminary chapter on "How to Use This Book"; Grammar; Syntax and Other Matters; and Vocabulary and Bibliography.